




Speech By  
**Anastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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**APPROPRIATION BILLS: LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY  
COMMITTEE**

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.21 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 portfolio budget estimates. This estimates hearing was an embarrassment to the government on a number of fronts, but most tellingly was the fact that government members of the committee ran out of questions a short way into the second session. The interesting fact about this is that as a member of the committee you are actually paid extra money to serve on that committee and as chair you are paid even more. It is not very difficult to read the SDS. It is not too difficult to ask the questions and to go through the SDS.

I say to the Attorney-General that I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to examine the Acting Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the CEO of Legal Aid Queensland and of course the Public Trustee. It gave us great enjoyment to be able to ask a range of questions to all of these people because we considered—

**Mr Bleijie:** You asked the Ombudsman, 'What does the Ombudsman do in Queensland?'

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Attorney can have his say later. Staffing at the CMC was again raised as a significant issue at this year's estimates hearing, as it was last year. Some 28 positions have been disestablished. In addition, a further 26 permanent positions were vacant at the CMC as at 30 June 2013. Of these, only nine are currently being backfilled. Similarly, CMC staff gave a concerning analysis to the committee earlier this year in relation to the effect that the new confiscation laws are likely to have on resourcing. The opposition will be carefully scrutinising the budget next year to ensure that funding is increased in line with the workload.

The Attorney-General failed to adequately explain the reasons for the failure of the first boot camp at Kuranda. He was, however, prepared to admit that it fundamentally went wrong, a matter for which he took direct responsibility. The Attorney-General's position on mandatory voter ID for elections did not stand up to scrutiny, nor did his explanation of the increase in the donation disclosure cap to \$12,400. This is a significant reduction in openness when roughly 95 per cent of donations to the LNP and ALP were below \$12,400. The Attorney's explanation of the changes to the public holidays in Queensland was laughable at best. He consistently explains moving Labour Day because it gives a more even spread of public holidays in the first and second halves of the year. The reality is there has been no change to the number of public holidays in the first and second halves of the year.

Finally, the Attorney-General has also provided advice that many of the initiatives he has announced since becoming Attorney have been funded from a reallocation of resources realised from savings achieved through prudent staff management. It is clear from the budget papers therefore that the staff cuts, at least in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, have largely been to fund election commitments rather than to pay down debt.

Any changes to union accountability laws in Queensland were exposed as being purely politically motivated. The changes to disclosure that apply only to employee and not employer organisations, the creation of the Building Construction Compliance Branch and the abolition of industrial inspectors clearly showed the motivation. As the director-general said—

The Registrar of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission advises that there is one (1) ongoing investigation into the financial administration of the Queensland Retail Traders Association.

I am advised that the registrar has not conducted any other investigation for wrongdoing by any industrial organisation in the past 10 years.